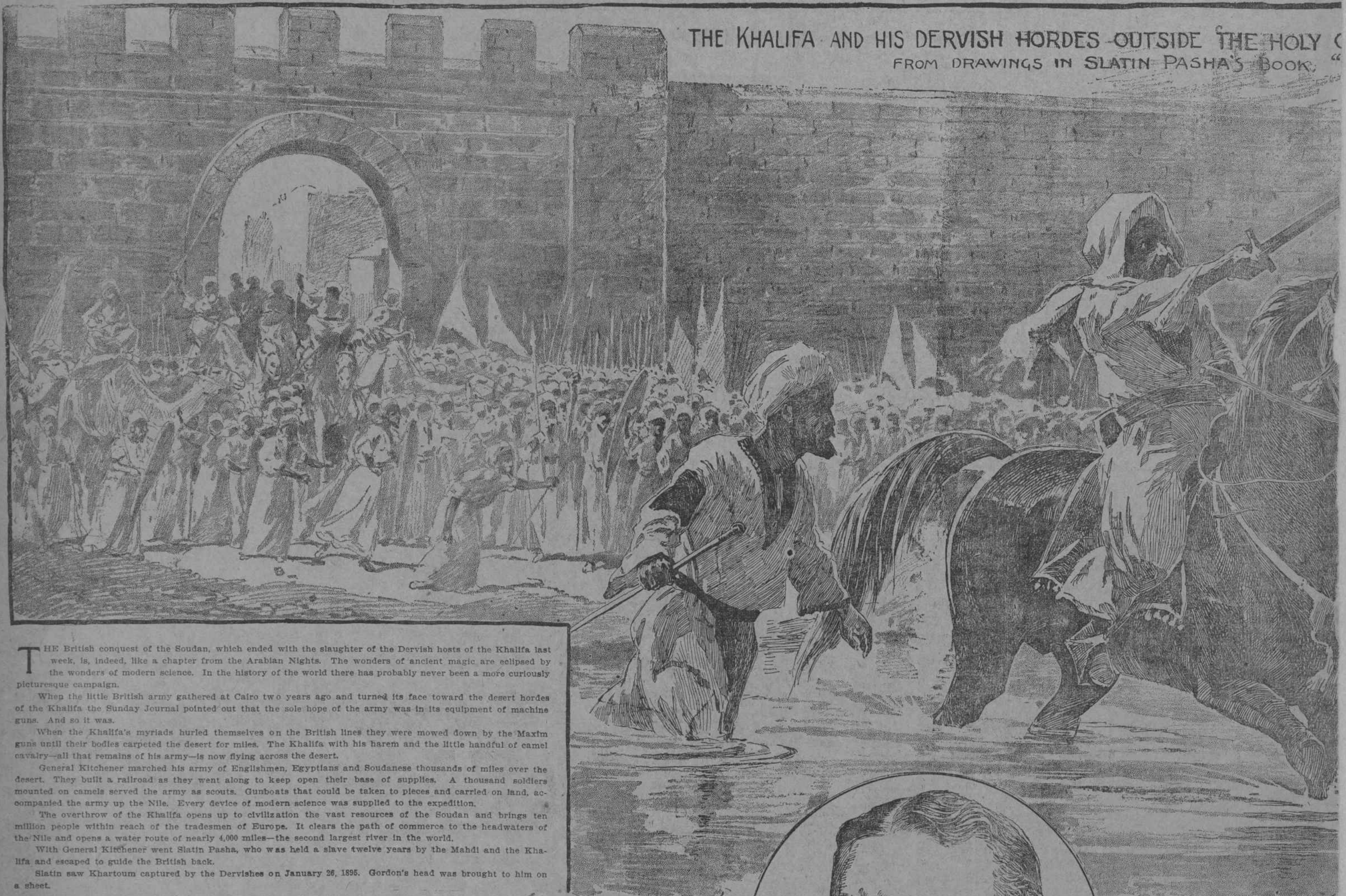


# LIKE A MODERN "ARABIAN NIGHTS" GEN CONQUEST OF THE DESERT

Fables of Ancient Magic Eclipsed by Real Deeds of Modern Science.

THE KHALIFA AND HIS DERVISH HORDES OUTSIDE THE HOLY CITY  
FROM DRAWINGS IN SLATIN PASHA'S BOOK.



THE British conquest of the Sudan, which ended with the slaughter of the Dervish hosts of the Khalifa last week, is, indeed, like a chapter from the Arabian Nights. The wonders of ancient magic are eclipsed by the wonders of modern science. In the history of the world there has probably never been a more curiously picturesque campaign.

When the little British army gathered at Cairo two years ago and turned its face toward the desert hordes of the Khalifa the Sunday Journal pointed out that the sole hope of the army was in its equipment of machine guns. And so it was.

When the Khalifa's myriads hurled themselves on the British lines they were mowed down by the Maxim guns until their bodies carpeted the desert for miles. The Khalifa with his harem and the little handful of camel cavalry—all that remains of his army—is now flying across the desert.

General Kitchener marched his army of Englishmen, Egyptians and Sudanese thousands of miles over the desert. They built a railroad as they went along to keep open their base of supplies. A thousand soldiers mounted on camels served the army as scouts. Gunboats that could be taken to pieces and carried on land, accompanied the army up the Nile. Every device of modern science was supplied to the expedition.

The overthrow of the Khalifa opens up to civilization the vast resources of the Sudan and brings ten million people within reach of the traders of Europe. It clears the path of commerce to the headwaters of the Nile and opens a water route of nearly 4,000 miles—the second largest river in the world.

With General Kitchener went Slatin Pasha, who was held a slave twelve years by the Mahdi and the Khalifa and escaped to guide the British back.

Slatin saw Khartoum captured by the Dervishes on January 26, 1895. Gordon's head was brought to him on a sheet.

WITH the conquest of the Sudan falls a great fanatical African empire founded by the Mahdi or Mohammedan Messiah, and bequeathed to his successor, the Khalifa Abdullahi, now a fugitive. General Kitchener's men won every battle they fought. They met men who fought to the death every time. The Anglo-Egyptian army numbered 20,000. They overcame armies numbering from 40,000 to 60,000 men. The one defeated near Khartoum on September 8 is estimated at 40,000 men.

Right into the heart of the world's greatest desert he took his men. Millions of ferocious blacks surrounded them. The army, advancing rapidly, built its own railroad through the desert as it went. This road had a gauge of four feet. A thousand trained camel riders accompanied the army, scouring the desert like swift cruisers at sea.

Large gunboats went up the Nile with the army. These could be taken to pieces and carried on the railroad when rapids were encountered or the river ran dry.

The health of the army was splendid. British troops under the scorching sun were in better condition than they would have been in England. They were not allowed to touch a drop of strong drink.

They fought against greater numbers than the British Army has encountered since Waterloo. They never met a reverse.

The slaughter of the Khalifa's followers has been awful. In the battle of the Atbara, in April, they lost between 3,000 and 4,000 men. In the last great fight outside Khartoum they lost between 10,000 and 15,000 men. They are the only men in the world who will charge over an open country against a battery of machine guns all in good working order.

Now General Kitchener's great object is attained. Gordon is avenged. England is freed from a great shame. Slatin Pasha, to whom the dead Gordon's head was shown in derision, will witness the final humiliation of the chief murderer.

A fanatical religious power that threatened to overrun Africa is crushed forever. Mahdism is dead.

England has found a great new general—Sir Herbert Kitchener, sirdar of the Egyptian army. An enormous step toward British domination in Africa has been made.

Thirteen years ago the Mahdi murdered Gordon and chased a British expedition back to Egypt. For thirteen years the power he founded ruled the Sudan despotically and cruelly. To-day his successor, the Khalifa, is a fugitive.

At one time the Mahdi's followers menaced Egypt. Had the British Government remained as weak as when it abandoned Gordon, the howling Dervishes would doubtless have overrun the most ancient and prosperous land in Africa.

The Mahdi pretended to be a reincarnation of Mahomet. His power started in the same way as that of the prophet, and at one time was as great. If modern Europe were devoted exclusively to the arts of peace, the Mahdi might have conquered the whole of it and made its people Islamists.

The present British administration in Egypt is vigorous. The army in the Sudan is the finest that has ever fought under British officers. It is superior to the army at home.

One great result of the capture of Khartoum is to bring the Cecil Rhodes All-British Cape Town to Cairo Railroad within measurable distance of accomplishment.

The way for the All-British Railroad is now clear but for a trifling obstacle. Starting at the north the British have Egypt, the Sudan and British East Africa. This brings them within two hundred miles of the northern end of Lake Tanganyika. The intervening territory is German. The new Anglo-German agreement will enable the British to acquire a strip of land for their railroad. Lake Tanganyika is open to international navigation. South of the lake there is a clear stretch of British territory down to the Cape of Good Hope.

General Kitchener's army has built a railroad as it advanced to Khartoum. It is the most scientifically equipped army that ever made a campaign. Roentgen ray apparatus was included in its outfit.

The Dervish leader whom General Kitchener has now finally defeated is known as the Khalifa Abdullahi. He succeeded to all the powers spiritual and temporal of the Mahdi.

It was in 1883 that the Mahdi proclaimed a jihad or holy war against all infidels. The British had just occupied Egypt in order to suppress the rebellion of Arabi Pasha. The fierce black tribes of the Sudan rallied to the Mahdi's standard. Chief among them were the Bagaras. The Sudan was an Egyptian dependency. The Mahdi proclaimed himself a Messiah, a successor of Mahomet. According

to Mohammedan teaching, such a person is to appear on earth in its last days and settle its affairs. The Mahdi told his followers that they were to obey him as God. They did so.

In 1883 the Mahdists annihilated an Egyptian army of 10,000 men under Hicks Pasha. Position after position was captured by the Mahdists. The British troops fought several desperate and ineffectual battles with the Sudanese. Rudyard Kipling has given us the British soldiers' opinion of these black fighters, to whom he gives the name of "Fuzzy Wuzzys."

We've fought with many men across the seas,  
An' some of them was brave an' some was not:  
The Paythan an' the Zulu an' the Burmese;  
But the Fuzzy was the finest of the lot.

'E rushes at the smoke when we let drive,  
An' before we know, 'e's 'ackin' at our 'ead.  
'E's all 'ot 'ot and ginger when alive,  
An' 'e's generally shammin' when 'e's dead.

'E's a daisy, 'e's a ducky, 'e's a lamb,  
'E's a jolly-rubber idiot on the spree,  
'E's the on'y thing that doesn't care a damn  
For the regiment of the British Infantry.

So 'ere's to you, Fuzzy-Wuzzys, at your 'ome in the Sowdan;  
You're a pore, beghlighted 'eathen, but a first-class fightin' man;  
An' 'ere's to you, Fuzzy-Wuzzys, with 'is 'ere 'end of 'air—  
You big, black, boundin' beggar—fur you brak a British Square.

Mr. Gladstone's Government decided that Egypt, assisted by England, was not strong enough to fight the Mahdi. It sent General Charles George Gordon, a man of wonderful bravery and singular skill in dealing with savage races, to superintend the withdrawal of the Egyptian garrisons from the Sudan. Gordon went to Khartoum almost alone. It proved his grave.

The Mahdists besieged Gordon in overwhelming numbers. He sent for help. The British Government vacillated. The people of the city believed the Government was powerless to help him. On January 26, 1895, Khartoum fell with hardly a struggle, and Gordon was murdered unarmed. Two days later a British expedition arrived within sight of Khartoum, saw its ruins and retired.

There are many personal romances interwoven with the wonderful story of the Sudan. The tragedy of Gordon is one of them. The triumph of Slatin is another. For ten years he was a slave of the Khalifa. Now he is returning in triumph with the British army to identify his former oppressor when he is finally hunted down.

Slatin was a dashing young officer in the Austrian army. He went to Africa in search of adventure and entered the service of the Khedive of Egypt. He was eventually made Governor of the equatorial province of Darfur. From this he was driven by the Mahdist rising. While fleeing through the desert he was captured by the Khalifa Abdullahi, the Mahdi's principal general.

At first he was treated with consideration and made a sort of aide-de-camp to the Khalifa. He was forced to write the letter to Gordon demanding the surrender of Khartoum. During the siege he was loaded with chains and kept a close prisoner on suspicion of communicating with Gordon.

After the fall of Khartoum Gordon's head was brought to Slatin in a sheet. He thus describes this fearful incident:

"It was now Sunday, the 25th of January, 1895, a day I shall never forget as long as I live. That evening, when it was dark, the Mahdi and his Khalifa crossed over in a boat to where their warriors were all collected ready for the fight. It was known during the day that Khartoum would be attacked the next morning, and the Mahdi had now gone to brace up his followers for the fray by preaching to them the glories of Jihad, and urging them to fight till death. Pray Heaven Gordon may have got the news and made his preparations to resist in time.

"On this occasion the Mahdi and his Khalifa had most strictly enjoined their followers to restrain their feelings and receive the last injunctions in silence. Instead of with the usual shouts and acclamations, which might awaken the suspicions of the exhausted and hungry garrison. This solemn harangue over, the Mahdi recrossed and returned to the camp at dawn, leaving with the storming party only Khalifa Sherif, who had begged to be allowed to join in the holy battle.

"That night was for me the most excitingly anxious one in my life. If only the attack were repulsed Khartoum would be saved; otherwise all would be lost. Utterly exhausted, I was just dropping off to sleep at early dawn when I was startled by the deafening discharge of thousands of rifles and guns. This lasted for a few minutes, then only occasional rifle shots were heard, and now all was quiet again.



It was scarcely light, and I could barely distinguish objects. Could this possibly be the great attack on Khartoum? A wild discharge of firearms and cannon, and in a few minutes complete stillness.

"The sun was now rising red over the horizon. What would this day bring forth? Excited and agitated, I awaited the result with intense impatience. Soon shouts of rejoicing and victory were heard in the distance, and my guards ran off to find the news. In a few minutes they were back again, excitedly relating how Khartoum had been taken by storm and was now in the hands of the Mahdists. Was it possible the news was false? I crawled out of my tent and scanned the camp. A great crowd had collected before the quarters of the Mahdi and the Khalifa, which were not far off. Then there was a movement in the direction of my tent, and I could see plainly they were coming toward me.

"In front marched three black soldiers; one, named Shatta, formerly belonging to Ahmed Bey Dafaalla's slave bodyguard, carried in his hands a bloody cloth in which something was wrapped up, and behind him followed a crowd of people in weeping. The slaves had now approached my tent and stood before me with inquiring gestures. Shatta undid the cloth and showed me the head of General Gordon.

"The blood rushed to my head and my heart seemed to stop beating, but with a tremendous effort of self-control I gazed steadily at this ghastly spectacle. His blue eyes were half opened; the mouth was perfectly natural; the hair of his head and his short whiskers were almost white.

"Is not this the head of your uncle, the unbeliever," said Shatta, holding the head before me.

"What of it?" said I, quietly. "A brave soldier, who fell at his post. Happy is he to have fallen. His sufferings are over."

"Ha, ha!" said Shatta. "So you still praise the unbeliever, but you will soon see the result." And leaving me, he went off to the Mahdi, bearing his terrible token of victory. Behind him I followed the crowd, still weeping.

"I re-entered my tent. I was now utterly heartbroken. Khartoum fallen and Gordon dead! And this was the end of the brave soldier who had fallen at his post; the end of a man whose courage and utter disregard of fear were remarkable, and whose personal characteristics had given him a celebrity in the world which was quite exceptional.

"Of what use was the English army now? How fatal had been the delay at Metemehi! The English advance guard had reached Gubar on the Nile on the 20th of January, 1895, at 10 a. m. On the 21st Gordon's four steamers had arrived. Then why did they not send some Englishmen on board, no matter how few, and dispatch them instantly to Khartoum? If they could only have been seen in the town the garrison would have taken fresh hope, and would have fought tooth and nail against the enemy, while the inhabitants, who had lost all confidence in Gordon's promises, would have joined most heartily in resisting the Dervish attack.

